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STARVED ROCK
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STARVED ROCK LEGENDARY

BY
HELEN MARTIN DONOVAN

The O'Donnell Printing Company
Chicago, Illinois


1915

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LOLOMI, the daughter
of an Illini Chief,
lived more than a
century and a half
ago, when The Rock
was young in history.

The tale of "Dave and Mary"
relates the actual occurrences
in the lives of those two in-
teresting personages at that
historic spot, but twenty years
last past.

THE AUTHOR.

M313225

Lolomi of the Illinois

A Legend of
Lover's Leap

Lolomi of the Illinois

IN THE Indian Village Back in the Woods dwelt a tribe of the peaceful Illinois. The Chief's daughter, Lolomi, was idolized by all because of her loveliness and beauty. This particular evening Chief Blackhawk called his daughter to him. "Lolomi," he tenderly said, "my Sunset of Life is nearing and it is my earnest wish that you wed Uncas, son of Chief Chassagoac."

Caressingly Lolomi laid her head upon her father's arm and said simply:

"I love him, father."

Slowly the old chief stroked her smooth black hair and ran his fingers lovingly down the long black braids.

"Today he will come, my daughter, and the wedding shall be planned."

With his arm placed about Lolomi, Chief Blackhawk gently led her down the trail, which wound its way down to the river. They reached the water's edge and sank down to rest and meditate. Together they watched the great, restless expanse of water. Behind them stretched the dense, interminable forest; from a nearby ravine came the sad wail of the whippoor-will. The closing day about them was like a solemn benediction. A slight rustling of the branches and Chief Chassagoac and his son, Uncas, stood before them.

These two old chiefs had long been bosom friends. Years had they planned that their respective tribes would be united through the marriage of Uncas and Lolomi.

After greetings the two old chiefs walked back to Blackhawk's village, leaving the lovers alone.

Side by side they sat on the branch of a fallen tree, and at last Uncas broke the silence.

“Lolomi, I am going away, but I shall return at the half-moon and make you my bride.”

“Going away?” questioned Lolomi, as though she had not heard aright.

“Yes, I am going to the village of Chicagou. I start at sunrise. Come, and I will show you my canoe. At break of day, following the half-moon, and as its first lights break over the forests,” and he pointed to the densely covered hills, “you may watch for me as I come down the stream.”

With a troubled look, she turned away.

“Lolomi, you must not doubt me. Come.”

Together they followed the trail up along the river. On its bank lay his canoe.

“Here is my canoe; on its bow I painted a half-moon and star. This signifies that at the half-moon I shall return to you. The star is the morning star—the morning of our happi-

ness; that morning we shall wed. The tribe of Chief Blackhawk, your father, and Chief Chassagoac, my father, shall be as one."

From the distant woods came the lone call of the whippoor-will. Lolomi trembled in her lover's arms.

"I'll be just that lonely without you, Uncas; think of me when you hear its call and hasten your return."

"Fear not, my loved one, for I shall think always of you. I must go now. Come to the cliff in the morning and bid me farewell."

Fondly he pressed her to him, and springing into the canoe, was soon lost in the darkening stream beyond.

The following morning the village of Kaskaskia was astir long before daydawn, preparing the chief's son for his journey, while up the river a few miles, on the summit of the great Rock, stood Lolomi eagerly watching. She had waited near the river bank,

but knowing she could see him coming sooner from the rock she had climbed to the very top. The cool October air blew about her. The newborn sun crept slowly above the distant hills, lighting the dense forest of red and gold and bringing more clearly to the vision of Lolomi the wonderful painting of the Master's hand. Her small brown hands were locked together as though silently pleading to the Great Spirit to aid her departing lover and grant his safe return at the half-moon.

Breathlessly she watched the silvery stream and at last Uncas appeared in the distance. Turning she fled down the steep stone steps and eagerly reached the river's edge.

"Yes, there is the half-moon and star on the canoe's bow—our morning star," she murmured. Up the mid-stream Uncas rowed, waving a farewell as he went. A sob fell from her lips as the small canoe disappeared in

the bend of the river. "Why did he not stop," she thought.

Sadly she passed up the old trail, which wended its way to The Indian Village Back in the Woods. The birds' early chatter, the squirrels frisking about, an occasional deer fleeing from her and the glorious beauties of mother nature, whom she loved so, seemed lost upon her now. Her heart was heavy. Some coming events seemed to "cast their shadows before." Dully she reached the village.

Indian chiefs and squaws moved about. At sight of her father she forced herself to be cheerful.

"My daughter, you are happy," he queried.

"Yes, father, but Uncas has just gone and I am lonely."

He wrapped his arm about her and said:

"You have these days to prepare for the most memorable event of a lifetime and you have not a moment for

sadness. These days shall be filled with pleasure for my daughter.”

She slipped away to her teepee and threw herself amongst her blankets.

Happy little Indian children romped about in the village.

“Lolomi! Oh, let’s get Lolomi!” they chorused.

To her teepee they ran, loudly calling her name. She was their idol. Lolomi—all happiness—all love.

Hearing their approach, she quickly stepped without, and hiding her troubled thoughts she joined the merry children.

“Come, Lolomi, to the canyon and tell us again the story of the Devil’s claw prints in the stone.”

Small brown hands clasped hers and up into the canyon they went. Soon her doubts were at rest. Chattering happy little ones, the beautiful, restful scenes about her and, forgetting all else, she began again the story of “The Devil’s Claw Prints.”

“Once upon a time, long, long ago, an evil spirit with great wicked claws roamed about in this peaceful valley, terrifying little children like you all. In vain did your forefathers plead with the good spirits to overpower this monster. He lived in this very canyon,” and Lolomi’s voice sank to a frightened whisper in order that she might more strongly impress her fascinated listeners. With horrified expressions they crept more closely to her.

“Yes,” she repeated, “he lived right here. He never troubled older people because he knew too well that they would shoot him with an arrow, and so he kept far away from them. One day a little boy disappeared and the whole village turned out and searched the woods for him.

Canyons, ravines, tall prairie grass and the river bank were searched time and again, but always they returned with the same answer. After that chil-

dren were more afraid than ever to go out of sight of the lodges; they could never wander about in all these beautiful woods nor gather the pretty flowers, nor wade in the cool streams, nor climb the high rocks—and oh, scarcely anything could they do. And then one night, what do you think, the angry Storm Spirit strode forth and with a mighty wave of his hand struck this huge monster and hurled him down into this very canyon. His hideous claws struck the stone, and right there where you see those prints he was found the next morning. And over there in that cave the little boy was found and he was all right, and they took him back to the village and a great feast took place and every one was happy.’’

They clapped their hands and coaxed Lolomi to tell legend after legend.

Days passed by and this eventful evening found Lolomi alone on the

prodigious rock. Once more she was herself. The clear, bright half-moon stood out in the sky above.

“In the morning,” she murmured happily, “he will return.”

The call of the whippoor-will did not trouble her now. She was not alone, for surely in spirit Uncas was with her. The Great Spirit had watched. Uncas would return with the rising of the sun, she thought, in keeping with the custom of her people in choosing the day dawn as the charmed time for initiating all their important undertakings.

At dawning Lolomi parted the curtains of her tent and crept out. Down the long rows of teepees she passed until the trail to the Rock was reached. The woods about were silent as the tomb. On she fled. Her small, sandled feet seemed scarce to touch the ground. Up the steep, craggy steps she sprang to the summit of the rock. Nearly to the edge she went in her

eager expectation, for was this not her wedding morning? Had they not made all preparations in the village for her happy, solemn event? Shading her eyes from the early sun's rays, she eagerly scanned the up-stream. Round the wooded island came a canoe.

“Uncas, my beloved,” she breathed, and raising her eyes she thanked the Great Spirit for her lover's safe return.

Nearer and nearer came the canoe. She watched for the half-moon and star on its bow. Her heart beat madly. In her ecstasy she seemed scarce to breathe. Dangerously near the edge of the cliff she moved. Now she was able to discern the details. It was not the canoe. The half-moon and star were missing. Uncas had had some misshap and had taken another canoe, that he might not disappoint her. And then—what was the matter with her? Had her great joy turned to madness?

Uncas looked strange. A voice from below called to her.

“I bring you a message,” the strange voice called.

“Where is Uncas?”

“When you come down I shall tell you,” he answered, as he rowed to the water’s edge and sprang to the bank. She reached his side and repeated painfully.

“Where is Uncas?”

He did not answer.

“When will he return?” she questioned, unheeding his silence.

“He will never come back,” he whispered with bowed head.

She stared at him for a moment. Then slowly repeated his words, “Never come back.”

At sight of the anguish written in the depths of her eyes, the young brave felt he could not tell her more. A child-woman she seemed. A doe nearing the water for a drink glanced, and with a frightened, sad look in its

eyes, turned and fled. Lolomi turned once more to the bearer of sad tidings.

“He—is—dead?” Her lips seemed scarce to form the words.

“No,” he said, “he sent me with the message that he had wed another and would never return to The Indian Village Back in the Woods.”

“He — has — wed — another,” she faintly gasped, and into her eyes sprang the same frightened look he had just seen in the eyes of the doe. She swayed as though about to fall. He hurried to her side. In an instant she regained her strength and, turning, she fled like a mountain lioness up the steep stone steps. Intuitively he guessed her meaning and sprang after her. To the edge of the cliff she ran. Reaching her, he struggled to prevent her leaping into the waters far below.

Back to the village he half carried her. At sight of his daughter and after learning the young brave’s story, Chief Blackhawk took the broken-

hearted child in his arms, and thanking the messenger for saving her he turned away.

In awe-stricken groups squaws gossiped. All preparations for the wedding which was expected to take place that morning were forgotten in this new-found sorrow of their beloved Lolomi.

“My daughter, I would willingly lay down my life could I have spared you this sorrow, but it was written in your destiny and none could prevent it. You will forget. Youth and beauty will help you.”

Leaving her in tender care, the broken old chief walked slowly away into the deep forest, there alone to resign himself to his daughter's sorrow and his own bitter disappointment.

Each morning a guard watched Lolomi. Well they knew that only at the rising of the sun would she at-

tempt her frightful leap from the rock. Could she not then succeed, patiently she would wait for the following morning. Weary days passed. Days whose early mornings found Lolomi watching and whose loving guard closely followed.

“She will forget,” said Chief Blackhawk.

“To the South for the winter we shall soon go and she will forget,” sadly repeated his friend, Chief Chasagoac.

But Lolomi did not forget, and one morning she eluded the guard and fled to the summit of the massive rock and hurled herself into the silent, merciless waters below. Closely behind followed the guard, but too late. Reverently they raised her from the water. She still breathed. They laid her on the river bank and tried to revive her. She slowly opened her dark eyes and one word fell from her lips.

“Uncas.”

From The Indian Village Back in the Woods two days later a mournful funeral cortege wound its way, headed by their black-robed friend, who had come to teach them the better life. Up the old trail, past deep, hollow canyons, cool, shaded ravines, around massive rocks, back to the Indian burying grounds, they were taking away their Lolomi—their bright ray of love and happiness.

Gently up into the tree-grave they placed her, facing the rising sun, that her spirit might find its way. The low moan of the leaves above seemed to sigh a parting requiem and the soul of Lolomi had found its Happy Hunting Ground.

In the distant village of Chicagou Uncas was happy with his new-found bride.

Dave and Mary

A Tale of
Starved Rock
Twenty Years
Ago

Dave and Mary

TWELVE years had elapsed since Dave took employment on my farm, and during all that time he had worked faithfully, never complaining of the irksomeness of his labor; but often in his eyes I had seen the longing to be free. The Indian blood came strongly to the fore when, his day's work done, he wandered away among the ravines, canyons and up the old trail along the river's edge. Frequently I had seen him roaming about the spot where once stood an Indian village. There still remained the marks where stood the teepees of his forefathers, and scattered about exposed by recent rains were pieces of flint found useful by his ancestors in the hunt or on the warpath. These

he lovingly gathered and put in his pocket.

One day as I was preparing to drive to the nearest town he came to me and said:

“Mr. Weymouth, will you please bring a lady back with you tonight? She is coming from the East on the seven-fifteen train, and it will be too dark for her to walk out to the cottage.”

The request seemed a strange one, but needless to say, I readily assented. On my way I fell to wondering why a lady was coming to visit Dave. He was always reserved and seldom mentioned his life as spent previous to coming to the Rock. He had been married for five years and seemed devoted to his wife and two small sons. That the guest he expected must be a relative of his wife I became convinced.

I arrived at the station. The train had come and gone. Looking about I

saw a woman coming toward me, who seemed instinctively to know me and said:

“You are Mr. Weymouth?”

“Yes,” I answered, “and you are the lady Dave expects?”

Twilight was gathering and still I felt a soft, wistful expression had passed over her face as she bent her head in reply. She did not speak a word during the long trip back to The Rock. From the dense and almost interminable forest rose the moon, resplendent and glorious, and I looked into her face. She was beautiful. Her features were small and regular. Her face in anticipation wore a look of tender longing. Soft, golden-brown hair wreathed her features. Her eyes were large and as blue as the heavens into which she so silently gazed. She was quietly though richly dressed. It seemed so strange that she asked no questions. Every one wished to know of this historical spot to which she was

journeying. She had no trace of the Indian blood in her veins I was satisfied, but was a gentlewoman of the white race.

We arrived at the farm and I led the way up the trail to the cottage. It seemed a desecration to change her train of thoughts, so we walked on in silence. As we neared French Canyon I pointed out to her Dave's cottage. It stood side by side with another back under the foot of a hill. A dim light shone from a window. Dave, his wife and children met us at the door. With a low sob of happiness my late passenger threw herself into Dave's eager, outstretched arms. Turning, I wended my way thoughtfully homeward. Down the old trail I went with these thoughts surging through my mind. Who could the woman be? What relation did she bear to Dave? Why was she here? That it was proper for her to visit them I felt positive, for had it not been, Dave's wife would

have objected. Being thus convinced, I turned my thoughts to other things.

The morning following Dave came to me and made this simple request:

“Mr. Weymouth, will you please allow my guest to occupy the cottage adjoining ours?”

“Why certainly, Dave,” I gladly assented, “she is most welcome.”

Thanking me, he turned away.

Later in the day things became more serious when, on reaching the fields, to find Dave and the woman together, and she was husking corn! She was wearing a dress and sunbonnet of Dave’s wife, but the homely garb did not disguise her beauty. Her soft, well-moulded hands and dainty manner spoke loudly of being unaccustomed to such work.

Thus the days went by. Dave was as faithful as he had always been and every day found the mysterious stranger by his side in the corn field. The intense heat of the sun upon one

occasion caused her to faint and it was pathetic to see how tenderly the half-breed restored her. He begged her to return to the cottage, but she remained obdurate and once again took up her dreary task.

More than one hundred years before these happenings several tribes of the Illinois Indians had villages in this immediate vicinity. The ruins of one particular village interested me greatly, and one evening, several weeks after the arrival of the stranger, I went into a cool canyon nearby it to rest. Presently I heard voices above and recognized them as belonging to Dave and his visitor. It seemed unprincipled to remain, but I gave in to my curiosity.

“And there was the home of my ancestors,” Dave was saying; “there are still the marks where their teepees stood, and in daylight we shall go there and you can see it all then. On

the opposite side of the creek is still another part of the village.”

He continued to explain and I slipped noiselessly away.

The evening following I wondered why Dave had not returned at the usual time with the horses from the field, and set out to look for them. Twilight was fast falling and I could scarce find my way. To my surprise, I came upon the horses, hitched to the wagon, standing amongst the corn stalks, and a short distance away in the gathering shadows I saw two figures. They were Dave and Mary, for I had heard him call her by that name. They were seated and Dave held her closely in his embrace. I was shocked at such behavior on the part of Dave and spoke sharply, questioningly:

“Dave?”

He rose quickly, as did also his companion. I asked her to leave Dave and me alone. A look of unutterable sor-

row crossed Dave's face as Mary turned and walked away in the darkness.

"Dave," I indignantly said, "you must send this lady away. To say I am bitterly disappointed in you is expressing it weakly; your first thought should be for your wife and little boys; it is not fair that they should suffer through the gossip that will surely follow your actions of the past six weeks."

I looked for some explanation, but Indian-like, he remained silent.

"I have never seen an unprincipled act done by you since I've known you, and now you must make your choice."

In anguished words the Indian answered solemnly, earnestly:

"She shall go tonight."

As he uttered the words, a low moan fell on the stillness about us and Mary came out of the shadows.

"Mr. Weymouth," she pleaded, "please let me speak with you. This

is not Dave's fault; he does not deserve to be reprimanded."

Her voice was soft and winning, and, well—I consented.

Dave walked away.

Down the old trail Mary and I walked until we came to the foot of the great Rock.

"Will you go up there with me?" she questioned, pointing to the summit far above us.

Up its steep craggy side we climbed until the top was reached.

Seated on a fallen tree she turned her face wistfully to the newly rising moon. Its shimmery light fell caressingly on the deep forest, the ever-shaded ravines, the hollow canyons and the silently flowing body of water below us. The spot seemed to give her courage and she began:

"Mr. Weymouth, have you ever in your life loved another? Oh," she said impatiently, "not for a day nor a year, but as long as you can remember; one

who was an inspiration, in whose presence you lived in another world, away from the commonplace, one who loved you dearly in return, one with whom you were ideally happy and away—utterly lonely?”

Her voice had fallen to a low, pensive note and her little hands, torn and bruised from their recent work, were unconsciously outstretched to me.

“Most twenty years ago,” she went on, “in a small town down on the Ohio River lived two little children. The boy ten the girl seven. Together they went to school; he carried her books, as boy lovers have from time immemorial. Unlike most children, they were perfectly happy in each other’s presence; a group of other children to them was never necessary. This state of things continued with the two happy children until one day the girl’s mother forbade her to longer be friendly with the boy. The boy was a half-breed. His grandfather had been

a chief of one of the Illinois tribes and his mother a Frenchwoman of gentle breeding. This command saddened the lives of the two little lovers. Five years later they met alone. Tenderly he embraced her and bade her farewell. He besought her not to forget their love; some day he would return for her and they would take their love to a distant home. In a tiny locket he carried her picture.”

Mary sat absorbed in memories, all forgetful of my presence. The soft evening zephyrs played with the leaves above us. A loon in the distant woods sounded his weird cry. Mary started and painfully went on:

“Years passed and the girl grew to young womanhood. With her was ever the spirit of her Indian lover.”

The tender lips quivered pitiably and she whispered hoarsely:

“They told her that her lover had passed away. Never mind how she suffered. Day by day she prayed that

she might go where he had gone. Months passed and the girl's father, through an unfortunate investment, lost all. The mother prevailed upon the girl to marry a wealthy suitor. What mattered then? Dave was gone. 'Twas the same old story. Why should she not repay as far as she could her parents' devotion to her? She married. The world said she was beautiful. Envied by those less fortunate in the things of this life, she became a social queen. Was she happy? Ah, no. Had a merciful Fate sent her children perhaps she could have been more content, but, being denied, that seemed part of the crucible. One day something stronger than herself drew her to the old trysting place. In the gray shadows, resting against the dear old tree, was a form, and as she approached it came forth to her.

“Mary!”

“Then she was in his eager arms. Needless to say more. Two lives were

broken forever through the deed of those who thought they were befriending them. They never met again until you brought me out from the station six weeks ago.”

She fell on her knees and clasped my hands, begging pitiously to be allowed to remain. I raised her to her feet. The days of my youth came before me. How could I refuse her? But the world, what would it have to say? They would never believe in Dave and Mary as I did. From the darkened woods came the lone call of the whip-poor-will. Mary was crying softly. Despite whatever my heart longed to do my better judgment came to the fore.

“Mary, God knows from the depths of my heart I would like to grant your request, but I cannot. An irretrievable wrong has been done to you and Dave, though there is but one way now. You must go back to your husband. The world sets its standard, you must live

up to it. She had turned ashy white and stood trembling before me. Suddenly clutching the light wrap about her and with a low moan, she turned and fled down the steep incline and was lost in the darkness.

Fancy my surprise when, on going to the fields the next morning, to find no trace of Dave. I went to his cottage. His wife told me calmly that Dave and Mary had gone together on the midnight train.

“A love like theirs is found once in a life time,” she said quietly, “pity and forgive.”

I turned and walked away. The forest stifled me. I sought relief in a restful canyon. Seated on a boulder, I cried aloud in keen disappointment:

“Dave, why did you not have more strength of character? Why did you destroy the trust I had in you? Why have you brought disgrace upon your wife and babies? Why have you broken the most sacred law of God and

man? Then this love of yours and Mary's was not holy, as I pictured, but only the ugly, carnal thing."

Had the deed been done by my own son my grief could not have been more poignant.

A criptical sensation seemed creeping through the massive canyon. From out of a deep recess appeared a misty form. The apparition grew real. An old Indian chief stood before me. He slowly raised his right hand and pointed to the clear morning sky above us, and from his lips came distinctly these words:

"Judge not, lest ye be judged."

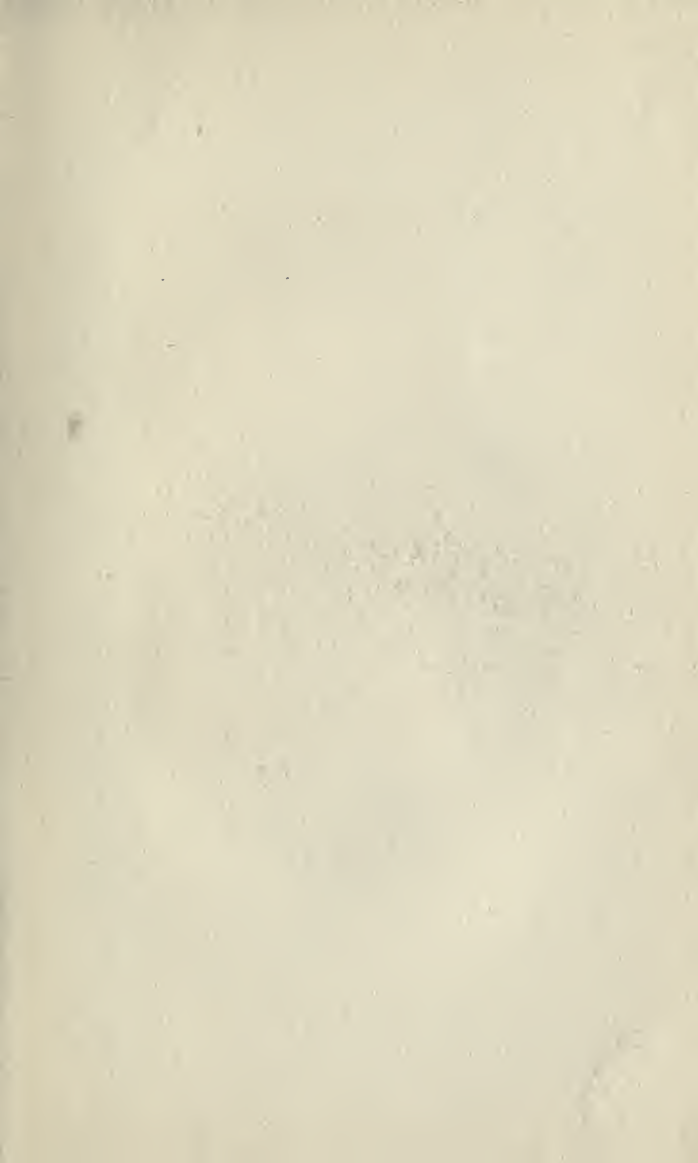
The mist fell slowly away. Tall, straight and nobly stood Dave before me.

"Dave!" I gasped.

He had heard my accusing cry and the distrust had wounded him beyond words.

With a hurt look he turned and walked up the old trail. So this was

the real man. He had taken his "Rosary" to the silent canyon and there had offered his sacrifice. A wave of shame came over me. Lifting my eyes to the Great Judge, I prayed that somewhere in a better world would there be a place for these incomparable lovers—Dave and Mary.



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